

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 041163

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, OCON, MILI, AWACS

SUBJECT: NATO AEW: ITALIAN POSITION

REF. A. USNATO 613, 031815Z FEB 77
B. STATE 298784, 082240Z DEC 76, C. ROME 440,111810Z JAN 77

1. REF A PROVIDES TEXT OF LETTER TO US DEFAD USNATO FROM
VICE ADMIRAL PATRELLI-CAMPAGNO, MILITARY COUNSELOR TO
THE ITALIAN DELEGATION TO NATO, RESPONDING TO US DEFAD
LETTER OF DEC 9, 1976 TRANSMITTING TO HIM OUR COMMENTS ON
CERTAIN CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY ITALIANS ABOUT OPERATIONAL
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CAPABILITY OF A NATO AEW FORCE OF 27 E-3A AIRCRAFT (REF B).
ITALIAN REPLY NOTES FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS WHICH PREVENTS
ITALY FROM PARTICIPATING "FULLY" IN NATO AEW PROGRAM.
AFTER CITING THOSE PROGRAMS RELATED TO AIR DEFENSE TO WHICH
ITALY IS PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE FUNDS DURING CURRENT 10-YEAR
DEFENSE FUNDING CYCLE, LETTER ADDS "THE SUGGESTED ITALIAN
CONTRIBUTION FOR THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE CURRENT 10-YEAR
CYCLE CANNOT BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT SINCE IT IS MOD CON-
SOLIDATED POLICY TO ENGAGE IN PROGRAMS WHERE FINANCIAL
RESOURCES ARE WELL IDENTIFIED AT THE START OF THE PROGRAM

ITSELF". LETTER NOTES ITALIANS ARE STILL CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY OF CONTRIBUTING TO GROUND ENVIRONMENT INTEGRATION COSTS. FINALLY, VICE ADMIRAL PATRELLI-CAMPAGNO'S

ETTER CITES A NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL AREAS OF CONCERN, BASED LARGELY UPON ITALIAN ANALYSIS OF NATO STUDY TM-534 DATED NOV 76. PRINCIPAL ITALIAN OPERATIONAL CONCERN SEEMS TO CENTER ON CONTENTION THAT TM-534 DEALS INADEQUATELY WITH AREA OF SPECIAL CONCERN TO ITALY ("ITALY AND MEDITERRANEAN SEA").

2. OUR COMMENTS ON VICE ADMIRAL PATRELLI-CAMPAGNO'S LETTER FOLLOW. IF US MISSION NATO WISHES TO SUPPLEMENT OR AMEND THESE OBSERVATIONS, PLEASE ADVISE. IF NOT, PLEASE PASS TO VICE ADMIRAL PATRELLI-CAMPAGNO AND INFORM DEPARTMENT, DOD AND EMBASSY ROME, AT WHICH TIME LATTER SHOULD ALSO PASS OUR RESPONSE TO INTERESTED PARTIES IN ITALIAN MOD.

3. ITALIAN FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS WHICH IMPINGE UPON ITALIAN ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE NATO AEW PROGRAM ARE WELL UNDERSTOOD BY ALL. IT IS PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THESE CONSTRAINTS THAT ITALY'S PROPOSED CONTRIBUTION UNDER THE "COMPROMISE FORMULA" IS CALCULATED ON THE BASIS OF "HALF-SHARES". THEY ALSO PROVIDE RATIONALE FOR THE VERY CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF BACKLOADING WHICH
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NATO ASYG LABERGE'S FUNDING PROFILE INCORPORATES FOR ITALY. WE CONTINUE TO HOPE THAT WHEN ITALIAN OPERATIONAL CONCERNS ARE RELIEVED, AS WE BELIEVE CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED, GOI WILL EVALUATE PARTICIPATION IN NATO AEW TO BE OF SUFFICIENT MILITARY AND POLITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE ALLIANCE AND TO ITALY THAT AN EXCEPTION CAN BE MADE TO ESTABLISHED MOD FUNDING PROCEDURES AND BUDGETARY GUIDELINES IN ORDER TO PERMIT AN ITALIAN CONTRIBUTION TO PROCUREMENT DURING THE CURRENT 10-YEAR BUDGET CYCLE, IF NOT THROUGH DIRECT PARTICIPATION THEN PERHAPS THROUGH SOME FORM OF "USER REIMBURSEMENT" ARRANGEMENT.

4. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND AND WISH TO ALLEVIATE THE ITALIAN CONCERN WHETHER THE SYSTEM ONCE ADOPTED WILL PROVIDE ADEQUATE MILITARY BENEFITS IN THE AREAS OF PRIMARY ITALIAN CONCERN, I.E., ITALY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA. WE POINT OUT BELOW (AS WE ALSO SOUGHT TO DO REF B) SOME OF THE REASONS WHY WE ARE CONFIDENT THIS WILL BE THE CASE. HOWEVER, IN EVALUATING OVERALL CONTRIBUTION OF THIS SYSTEM TO ITALIAN SECURITY, WE ALSO HOPE ITALY WILL GIVE FULL WEIGHT TO THE CONTRIBUTION THE SYSTEM WILL MAKE TO THE ALLIANCE'S ABILITY TO DETER AND TO COUNTER AN ENEMY ATTACK ANYWHERE WITHIN THE ALLIANCE'S AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY, WHETHER ON THE FLANKS OR IN THE CENTER. A SYSTEM WHICH

HELPS PREVENT (OR WIN) A BATTLE ANYWHERE IN EUROPE MAKES AN INCALCULABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE SECURITY OF EVERY MEMBER OF THE ALLIANCE.

5. REGARDING ITALIAN OBSERVATIONS ON STC/TM 534, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT TM 534 WAS DESIGNED AS A "CASE STUDY" OF POSSIBLE AEW DEPLOYMENT IN ONE SPECIFIC AREA OF THE SOUTHERN REGION. THIS WAS DONE IN ORDER TO KEEP THE TASK IMMEDIATE ANALYTICAL MANAGEABLE. FACT TM 534 DEALS PRIMARILY WITH EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN CANNOT BE INTERPRETED AS INDICATING NEGLECT OF ITALY OR MEDITERRANEAN AS A WHOLE IN SHAPE PLANNING. IN A QUALITATIVE CONFIDENTIAL

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SENSE THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY ARE IN FACT APPLICABLE THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE SOUTHERN REGION. WITH AWACS PRESENT IN THE SOUTHERN REGION, THE STUDY CONCLUDES THAT:

A. ACE INTERCEPTORS WOULD HAVE A GREATER CHANCE OF ENGAGING WARSAW PACT (WP) MEDIUM BOMBERS AND THUS PREVENT CLOSURES OF ACE AIR BASES.

B. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AVAILABLE INTERCEPTORS WOULD BE GREATLY INCREASED.

C. THE NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL WP OFFENSIVE SORTIES IS GREATLY REDUCED.

D. AWACS IS SURVIVABLE.

6. WE ADDRESS BELOW OTHER ITALIAN OPERATIONAL CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY VICE ADMIRAL PATRELLI-COMPAGNO:

A. FORCE SIZE (PARA 3 OF ITALIAN LETTER): ADMITTEDLY, AN AEW FORCE OF 27 AIRCRAFT CANNOT PROVIDE AS WIDE COVERAGE AS ONE OF 32. HOWEVER, THE MILITARY COMMITTEE (WITH ITALIAN PARTICIPATION) CAREFULLY REVIEWED THIS QUESTION AND, IN ITS MCM-69-76 OF SEPTEMBER 1976 STRONGLY REITERATED ITS PREVIOUS ENDORSEMENT OF THE MILITARY REQUIREMENT FOR AN AEW FORCE, EMPHASIZED THAT SUCH A FORCE WOULD OFFER THE ALLIANCE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLOIT TO THE FULL ITS IMMENSE INVESTMENTS IN OTHER AIR DEFENCE ASSETS, AND RECOMMENDED "IN UNEQUIVOCAL TERMS THE ACQUISITION OF A NATO AEW FORCE" EVEN SHOULD FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS REQUIRE A REDUCTION IN FORCE SIZE FROM 32 TO 27 AIRCRAFT. DEPLOYMENT OF THIS FORCE IN TIME OF CRISIS/WARFARE MUST REMAIN THE PREROGATIVE OF THE RESPONSIBLE NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES. HOWEVER, THE PROPOSED LOCATION OF AN FOB IN SOUTHERN ITALY -- AS NATO AND MILITARY COMMITTEE FORCE SIZE STUDIES ASSUME -- CONFIDENTIAL

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CERTAINLY INDICATES THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO COVERAGE OF THE SOUTHERN FLANK BY NATO MILITARY PLANNERS.

B. SHIP-BORNE ECM EFFECTS ON E-3A RADAR CAPABILITY

(POINTS 1,7, AND 11 IN ANNEX TO ITALIAN LETTER): THE EFFECT OF THE SHIP-BORNE BELL-SLAM HAS BEEN POSTULATED A NUMBER OF TIMES. ALTHOUGH THIS MIGHT AT FIRST GLANCE APPEAR AN ATTRACTIVE OPTION FOR THE ENEMY, IN OUR VIEW THE SHIP-BORNE JAMMER COULD BE EASILY LOCATED AND PUT OUT OF ACTION.

C. COST OF THE JTIDS SYSTEM FOR NATO AEW AND C (POINT 3 IN ANNEX TO ITALIAN LETTER): COSTS OF INCLUDING THE JTIDS SYSTEM IN BOTH AIRBORNE AND GROUND ENVIRONMENT SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN ASSESSED AND ARE INCLUDED IN TOTAL PROGRAM UNDER DISCUSSION IN BRUSSELS. IT MAY ALSO BE NOTED THAT JTIDS DEVELOPMENT COSTS ARE BEING BORNE ALMOST ENTIRELY BY THE US.

D. ADEQUATE STUDY OF COVERAGE OF AREAS OF PRIMARY CONCERN TO ITALY (POINT 4 IN ANNEX OF ITALIAN LETTER): PARAS 4,5, AND 6(A) ABOVE, ADDRESS THIS POINT.

E. SYSTEM SURVIVABILITY IN A SOUTHERN FLANK CONTEXT (POINTS 5,6, AND 10 OF ANNEX TO ITALIAN LETTER): E-3A FLEXIBILITY ALLOWS FOR FORWARD DEPLOYMENT IN TIMES OF TENSION/CRISIS AND DEEP LOOK CAPABILITY PROVIDES ADEQUATE WARNING FOR WITHDRAWAL BEYOND ENEMY GCI REACH ONCE CONFLICT BREAKS OUT, AFTER WHICH "DEEP LOOK" FUNCTION GIVES WAY TO SUPPORT OR MANAGEMENT OF THE AIR BATTLE. DUE TO ITS JET SPEED, ITS ABILITY TO CALL INTERCEPTORS TO ITS DEFENSE, ITS ABILITY TO PERFORM RAPID DESCENTS BELOW WP RADARS, AND THE DIFFICULTY ENCOUNTERED BY ATTACKING AIRCRAFT IN LOCATING AWACS WITHOUT THE AIDE OF GROUND RADARS AWACS IS CONSIDERED HIGHLY SURVIVABLE. CONFIDENTIAL

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STC TM 535 DRAMATICALLY POINTS OUT THAT SOME 80 PERCENT OF THE SORTIES LAUNCHED AGAINST AWACS COULD BE KILLED OR TURNED BACK AND THOSE NOT ENGAGED COULD NOT SUCCEED IN FINDING AWACS.

F. NATO AEW'S CONTRIBUTION IN AREAS WHERE NATO AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES ARE INADEQUATE (POINT IN ANNEX TO ITALIAN LETTER): IN-PLACE AEW COVERAGE CAN PROVIDE ESSENTIAL EARLY WARNING OF MASSING OF WARSAW PACT ATTACK AIRCRAFT, FACILITATING MILITARY COMMANDERS' ASSESSMENT OF THREATS AND ALERTING DEPLOYMENT OF APPROPRIATE FORCES. IN TIME OF TENSION OR LOCAL CRISIS, THIS COULD BE THE

SOUTHERN FLANK. SHOULD HOSTILITIES ENSURE, AEW COULD ACTIVELY ASSIST THE COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE IN TACTICAL ALLOCATION OF FORCES, IN THE TIMING OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT, AND IN THEIR RECONSTITUTION DURING OR AFTER THE BATTLE. WITHOUT AEW, ON THE OTHER HAND, SUCCESSIVE

ATTACKS ON GROUND BASED RADAR SYSTEMS COULD PERMIT WP BOMBERS TO ATTACK ACE BASES UNDETECTED, AND MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR ACE INTERCEPTORS TO DISRUPT THEIR RAIDS.

G. ESM CAPABILITY ENVISAGED FOR MODEL C VS. THE MARITIME REQUIREMENTS FOR SEARCH AND IDENTIFICATION (POINT 12 IN ANNEX TO ITALIAN LETTER): IN THE JUDGMENT OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE, MODEL C MEETS REQUIREMENTS. ADDITIONALLY, PROVISIONS ARE BEING RETAINED TO PERMIT EXPANSION OF THESE CAPABILITIES SHOULD THAT BECOME NECESSARY.

7. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE OPERATIONAL CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE ITALIANS IN REF A ARE RESOLVABLE IN FAVOR OF THE ENVISAGED E-3A MODEL C SYSTEM, DEPLOYMENT OF WHICH TO SOUTHERN FLANK WOULD CLEARLY BE OF GREAT MILITARY VALUE TO ITALY.

8. -- WE WELCOME THIS CON-
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TINUING DIALOGUE WITH THE ITALIANS. WE ARE PLEASED THAT THE EARLIER OPERATIONAL QUERIES BY THE ITALIANS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN ADEQUATELY ANSWERED (DECEMBER EXCHANGE NOTED REFS B AND D). IF FURTHER OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS ARE RAISED BY ITALIANS EITHER IN BRUSSELS OR ROME WE ARE PREPARED TO RESPOND ACCORDINGLY, INCLUDING DISPATCH OF QUALIFIED BRIEFERS/TECHNICAL EXPERTS TO ROME IF REQUESTED TO DO SO. HOWEVER YOU SHOULD MAKE CLEAR WE ARE RESPONDING TO ITALIAN INQUIRIES AND NOT ENGAGED IN "HARD SELL" EFFORT.
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